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NAME: Shibata, Minejiro DATE OF BIRTH: 1902 PLACE OF BIRTH: Shizuoka
Age: 71 Sex: M Marital Status: W Education: Junior High School

PRE-WAR:
Date of arrival in U.S.: 5/1919 Age: 18 M.S. Y.Y. Port of entry: San Fran.
Occupation/s: 1. Fisherman 2. Student/School Boy 3. _____
Place of residence: 1. Terminal Island, Ca. 2. Los Angeles, Ca. 3. Hollywood, Ca.
Religious affiliation: None-Family-Buddhist 4. Returned to Terminal Island, Ca.
Community organizations/activities: _____

EVACUATION:
Name of assembly center: Bismarck (7 mos) & Santa Anita (1 mo.)
Name of relocation center: Jerome, Arkansas (1 Yr)
Dispensation of property: Sold Names of bank/s: _____
Jobs held in camp: 1. _____ 2. _____
Jobs held outside of camp: Gardener's Wholesale Dealer & Janitor (Utah)
Left camp to go to: Utah (In 1943)

POST-WAR:
Date returned to West Coast: Fall 1947 (To California)
Address/es: 1. Utah (5 years) 2. Terminal Island, California
3. _____
Religious affiliation: None - Family's Religion - Buddhist - Zen Sect
Activities: 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: Deceased

Name of interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe Date: 9/11/73 Place: Long Beach, Ca.
Translator: Mariko Inegge

NAME: MR. MINEJIRO SHIBATA
Age: 71 years old

Birth Date: 1902

Place of Birth: Shimizu in Shizuoka

Came to United States: May, 1919

Major Occupation: Fisherman

Relocation Camp: Santa Anita Race Track
A month later sent to Arkansas

Interview Date: September 1973, in Long Beach, California

Interviewer: Rev. Heihachiro Takarabe

Translated Date: December 1973

Translator: Mrs. Mariko Magee

NAME: Minejiro Shibata

Q. What is your name?

A. My name is Minejiro Shibata.

Q. Minejiro. Does "mine" in "Minejiro" mean the peak of a mountain?

A. Yes.

Q. What part of Japan are you from?

A. I'm from Shizuoka.

Q. Shizuoka?

A. Shimizu in Shizuoka.

Q. When were you born?

A. In 1905, or Meiji 35.

Q. Then, are you seventy-one years old now?

A. I'm about seventy-one and a half years old.

Q. What kind of family are you from?

A. We're farmers.

Q. Farmers. Didn't you fish?

A. We owned a boat, but we didn't fish too much. Three partners were co-owners of a boat for fishing tuna. We couldn't make too much profit. Farming was our main source of income. We rushed to the beach and fished whenever we saw fish, so we weren't real fishermen.

Q. How old were you when you came to the United States?

A. In 1919, when I was in my eighteenth calendar year.

Q. In your eighteenth calendar year?

A. In May, when I was eighteen.

Q. Do you remember anything that had happened in Japan before you left?

A. Yes, I remember it roughly.

Q. What kind of events occurred?

A. I remember the "rice-riot" best. The families which had a large crop of rice were all burned out. In short, it was a so-called riot here. Those families with a pile of rice sacks had them cut at the bottom, and burned by other people.

Q. Did the villagers burn it?

A. No. There was a nearby town, and some townsmen did it. In those days, the price of rice as a whole was raised very high, and the poor had a hard time. I don't know who burned it, but I'm sure that the poor took their revenge on the rich and set the fire. I went to see the ruins of the fire. The place was still smoking.

Q. Is it called the "rice-riot"?

A. Yes, it is. I don't remember it clearly, but I'd say it was in 1915. It was a hard period.

Q. It was a terrible period, wasn't it?

A. The poor had a hard time because of the higher price of rice. We farmers didn't suffer too much, for we had yams, wheat and rice on our own farms. Those poor townsmen such as ... couldn't afford enough rice. They bought only one sho* of rice at a time, so the term "buying one sho of rice" was used as a pronoun of the poor.

*A Japanese measure of weight.

Q. Do you remember anything else?

A. I remember the days when farmers had a hard living. When I was a boy, farmers had little cash. They ate the products from their farms. My parents never bought a toy for me when I was a child. I had a ... knife, so I made my toys with it. Even now, I make almost everything by myself. I was surprised that the children in this country can't make anything by themselves.

Q. How far did you go in school?

A. I graduated from high elementary school, which is a junior high school here. There were no schools near my house, so I walked three or four miles a day in order to get to school.

Q. What do you remember about the school?

A. I remember it very well.

Q. What do you remember?

A. I remember that I didn't study hard at school.

Q. What was fun at school?

A. Fun at school ... when I was fourteen or fifteen years old, I helped my parents water the vegetables every morning in the summer season before going to school. I felt so hungry before getting to school that I ate my lunch on the way to school. Since I didn't have anything to eat during the lunch time, I bought some roast sweet potatoes or dried persimmon at the cost of twenty or thirty sen.** I never stole anything from anybody. I

**A small denomination of Japanese money.

A. was taught not to steal, and I have been impressed by that lesson since my childhood.

Q. What was your family religion?

A. Our family religion was Buddhism --- the Zen sect.

Q. The Zen sect?

A. When I was in Shimizu, I didn't know it was the Zen sect. I learned that after I came here. Our village as a whole wasn't too religious. No villagers went to the temple to listen to the sermon given by the priest. The priest was born and raised in our village. As we knew him since his childhood, we didn't put any special importance on his sermon. Besides that, people don't usually want to listen to a young preacher. The son of the priest came back to the village and succeeded his father. He was one of my classmates. We went to school together.

Q. Do you still follow Buddhism?

A. No. I'm not too enthusiastic about religion. I hate to tell you this, but I've never listened to a minister at church. I believe I don't need anything if I don't trouble and bother people. I'm the third son in my family. Not even the eldest son went to the temple for a funeral service or something.

Q. Did you hear about Christianity when you were in Japan?

A. I heard the term, but I never attended any church. I don't recall such a thing as Christianity in my childhood.

Q. What motivated you to come to the United States?

A. My brother was here, and he motivated me to come here. He came here seven or eight years earlier than I. Since he couldn't lead a good life in Japan, he went to Venice, London and New York. He decided to remain in the United States, which was his purpose from the beginning.

Q. Your brother?

A. Yes, my brother. He called my father and mother, and my mother called me here. It's a complicated story. At that time, it was hard to obtain an immigrant's visa unless you had good backing.

Q. Did you stop at Hawaii?

A. Yes, I did. I think I came on the Saibei Maru.

Q. Did you stay in Hawaii for a long time?

A. No. Stopping in Hawaii overnight, the ship went directly to San Francisco.

Q. Did you arrive in San Francisco?

A. Yes, I did. In those days, not too many ships came to the Los Angeles Harbor.

Q. Was it in 1919?

A. Yes, it was in May of 1919.

Q. What kind of people were on board?

A. Almost everybody was an immigrant.

Q. Immigrant. Were there many ladies on board?

A. Yes, there were, but not too many ladies, because it took a long time to get to the United States at that time.

Q. Do you remember anything about the days in the ship?

A. Eating was the only thing I did in the ship; I didn't know anybody. I stayed on the bank (gate) most of the time. The lice bred in the ship, because we couldn't take a bath too often. I can never forget that.

Q. Wasn't it terrible?

A. The food served in the ship wasn't especially good. I didn't mind whether it was good or not. Even when I was in Japan, I couldn't eat anything sumptuous. I came with ....

Q. I see.

A. I felt at ease.

Q. Because you were taught by them?

A. . . . There were a lot of ... in the ship. I was on deck every day, and with tears, I watched other ships sailing in the distance. I didn't have any friends or acquaintances to talk to. It took fourteen or fifteen days to get here.

Q. What was your first impression of the United States?

A. I thought her a beautiful country.

Q. Did you?

A. I arrived around March and stayed on the Angel Island for three or four days in order to go through the immigration procedures. I was released after that.

Q. How did you feel on the Angel Island?

A. The wooden walls were covered with wire nettings. Chinese people drew letters and carved them on the walls. I

A. was amazed how delicate those letters were. They served Japanese food, but it wasn't too good. If we paid, we could eat American food. I don't recall clearly what I ate.

Q. Did you have to pay for the food?

A. I paid twenty-five cents for the American food.

Q. Did you pay for the Japanese food?

A. No, the Japanese food was free, but it wasn't good. I remember one American dish with diced beef. It was red and looked delicious, but it wasn't as good as it looked. I still remember that dish.

Q. How did they treat you at the Immigration Office? Did they treat you well or bad?

A. They treated us neither too well nor too bad. I didn't care about the treatment, for I didn't have to pay for anything. The only thing I didn't like was the bathroom. There were a lot of toilet bowls side by side without any doors. I, being Japanese, couldn't stand it.

Q. Did you have a physical examination?

A. Yes. They took our feces and examined it. They also examined us to see if we had a skin disease. .... That was all they checked for.

Q. What did you think about Caucasians when you saw them for the first time?

A. I thought them very great with their large bodies and pointed noses. At that time ... there weren't as many blacks as whites.

Q. How did Caucasians treat you?

A. They didn't treat me bad in particular.

Q. Did you have a bad experience with Caucasians?

A. I didn't have any in San Francisco, but I had a bad experience after I came here.

Q. Was it later?

A. Yes. Since I'm short tempered, I have fought against the whites with a stick. I hated to be looked down on. Whenever the whites looked down on me, I got really mad. They called us Japs. They must have thought us something like a dog.

Q. In those days, did anything joyous happen to you?

A. After landing, I took a train from San Francisco to Los Angeles. The train took me to the SP station but not the Union Station. The SP station located at Sixth and Central Avenue was separate from the Union Station. When I got off there, ... came to meet me. I was very happy.

Q. Did you come to Los Angeles directly?

A. Yes, I did, after four or five days.

Q. Hadn't you experienced any hardship at that time?

A. No, I hadn't.

Q. Was it later that you had a hard time?

A. Yes, much later.

Q. You had just arrived here at that time.

A. I came to Terminal Island. Do you know the place? Only Japanese people lived there; no English was heard or spoken there.

Q. Did you go to Terminal Island directly, right after you came here?

A. Yes. The whites working at the cannery came to Terminal Island only when there was a catch of fish during the daytime. Since the Japanese outnumbered the whites, the whites didn't say anything bad to us.

Q. Many Japanese people.

A. They felt quiet because they were afraid of being thrown into the ocean if we got mad. I felt good.

Q. Would you tell me about Terminal Island?

A. The people on Terminal Island had lived in Port La Sail, around the Santa Fe area, up until three or four years before I came. They moved to Terminal Island, because the canning company built houses for the employees. Those houses weren't made of plastered walls, but just wooden walls. . . . . It wasn't too bad there, for we had a Japanese store and we didn't hear any English.

Q. Did you go on a fishing boat?

A. Yes. I was a fisherman. I started to fish from May in the year I came. I earned some money during the summer season; I don't remember how much I earned, though. As Fall wasn't a good season for fishing, I went to the downtown area.

Q. Where did you go?

A. I went to downtown Los Angeles to attend school. I went to school, but I couldn't learn English very well. I

A. did my best to memorize English, but when I got up in the morning, I couldn't remember anything. English is really hard. Listening to it for a while, I could learn it. I couldn't learn it well at first. . . . . I went back to fishing the following summer, and earned from a thousand to fifteen hundred dollars.

Q. Was it in the summer?

A. Yes. I came back here in the fall. Not being able to afford to stay in a hotel, I worked as a schoolboy. I washed dishes in exchange for meals and fifteen dollars a month. In this way, I was able to pay my way through school. I hear a schoolboy can get seventy-five or eighty dollars a month today; at that time, I got only fifteen dollars a month.

Q. Was it in Los Angeles?

A. Yes. It was in Hollywood.

Q. Did you go to high school?

A. No. I didn't go to high school, because I couldn't understand English.

Q. Was it an English school?

A. Yes. The American schools at that time had a system for non-English speakers, which was called ... without any grades. Not only foreigners, but also white students with low grades went there.

Q. How long did you lead such a life?

A. I was in Hollywood for a half year and returned to Terminal Island after that. I wanted to attend high

A. school, but I stopped studying along the way. Some of my friends graduated from the University of Southern California. They overworked themselves in studying and taking care of their parents, younger brothers and sisters. They died of a disease. Unless you are super-healthy, it's impossible for you to go through college without any support.

Q. How long did you live on Terminal Island?

A. I went back to Terminal Island after that, and fished there. Instead of spending money, I and a few others saved four or five thousand dollars to build a fishing boat together in 1924. Our boat was among the biggest in those days. We went beyond Mexico to catch tuna.

Q. Mexico?

A. Yes.

Q. How big was your boat?

A. It was eighty-six feet long.

Q. Eighty-six feet long?

A. Yes. We heaped eighty or ninety tons of tuna on the boat. It was a big boat. Most of the boats at that time were all ... and small.

Q. Was tuna the only kind of fish you caught?

A. No. There were fish everywhere then. Other fishermen with smaller boats caught a lot of sardines all the time.

Q. Sardines?

A. Yes. They piled twenty-five tons of sardines all over the deck.

Q. Besides sardines, what else did you fish?

A. We caught "katsuo" in the summer.

Q. What do you call "katsuo" in English?

A. Bonito. We don't see it any more these days. We also caught the fish called "bunsen" in Japanese. In 1919, there were a number of "bunsen" all over the Los Angeles Harbor area. In that year, I and the co-owners caught about two hundred and thirty tons of "bunsen" with a chain attached to our net.

Q. Is it called "bunsen"?

A. It's called "bunsen", which is the best kind of "maguro" for raw fish?

Q. Is it "maguro"?

A. It's a fish with bluish-black skin.

Q. What do you call "maguro" in English?

A. Tuna.

Q. Tuna?

A. It's different from "bunsen".

Q. I see.

A. There were a number of fish in 1919; on the contrary, there were none in 1920. The white fishermen including the Slavs came in 1920, but they couldn't catch any fish.

Q. I see.

A. There were plenty of Mackerels and sardines.

Q. Did you catch them?

A. Yes, I did. Many Japanese fishermen made their living fishing for sardines.

Q. Were there that many?

A. Yes. They didn't can tuna too much at the cannery, but they did can sardines. We fished aiboko in the summer. It was good for canning.

Q. Was it aiboko?

A. Yes, it was aiboko.

Q. Do you still find aiboko? I don't see canned aiboko too often.

A. You don't find aiboko these days.

Q. Not these days.

A. You can fish for them at Abila. You have to go two hundred or two hundred and fifty miles off the coast in order to find them.

Q. They're decreasing.

A. I used to find them only fifteen or twenty miles off the coast. I don't see them anywhere today.

Q. Have they died out?

A. I don't know whether they've died out or something is wrong with the current.

Q. How many Japanese live on Terminal Island?

A. There were about five thousand Japanese people on Terminal Island.

Q. Were they all fishermen?

A. That included the fishermen and their children ....

Q. When was it?

A. Before the war.

Q. Was everybody either fishing or working at the cannery?

A. Yes.

Q. Was the business brisk?

A. Yes, it was. We were eating fairly well. Though our business was brisk, few fishermen became rich.

Q. Why?

A. I don't know why.

Q. Did they waste money?

A. I guess we didn't make too much profit after all. Talking about farmers, farm owners made a big profit but the tenant farmers didn't.

Q. Then, did the fishing boat owners make money?

A. Yes, they did. There was no such thing as tax at that time. Though I was working, I didn't know what the income tax was.

Q. How many fishing boats were there at Terminal Island?

A. There were hundreds of fishing boats there. The big ones at that time were between fifty and fifty-five feet long.

Q. Then, was yours the biggest one?

A. Yes, in those days.

Q. Is that so?

A. Anyway, the condition of aiboko was good. It cost

A. between eighty-five and a hundred dollars per ton. We caught a lot of them.

Q. How much did you earn every year?

A. If you were alone, you could earn two or three thousand dollars a year at best.

Q. Is that by the standards of that time?

A. Yes. We earned more after 1920, for we built a bigger boat. I learned how to operate a bigger engine, called diesel engine. Since I couldn't get along with the co-owners, I sold the boat. In 1929, I went to Japan for ten months. After coming back from Japan, I was employed as an engineer by .... I earned about three thousand dollars a month -- that was a large sum of money in those days. Finding a new continental shelf, I made three sailings a day. No one complained about it; no one could search for me, for there were no wireless radios at that time.

Q. What do you mean by three sailings?

A. I caught a boatful of tuna. Right after I unloaded the fish, I went fishing again.

Q. Did you repeat this three times a day?

A. Yes. Nobody else did that. There were so many fish that I could earn three thousand dollars a month at one time. Three thousand dollars then, is worth about ten thousand dollars today.

Q. You must have had ... episodes in your fisherman's life - interesting stories, bitter ones, and so on?

A. Yes. Fishing might look easy when there aren't any fish around. We just look for them. Once we start fishing, we often stay overnight -- that's exhausting.

Q. Do you usually look for fish until you find them?

A. Yes, off the coast. In 1928, while I was hanging the net, the end of the net was cut by a rock by accident and I was caught under the net. I was told that I was unconscious for a half hour with a bloody mouth. I was sent directly to a hospital on another fishing boat. The results of my X-rays were fine; that is, nothing was wrong with me. Some of the fishermen got their leg bones broken, and others got their arm bones broken. But I was perfectly all right.

Q. Did the accident happen on your own boat?

A. Yes.

Q. You must have had such accidents frequently.

A. Yes, very frequently.

Q. Generall speaking, fishermen are rough, aren't they?

A. Compared to farmers, they are rough. They're foul tongued.

Q. Are they?

A. Though they're foul-tongued, they aren't ill-hearted.

Q. They aren't?

A. No, they are. Mr. Matsuda from Fukui can prove that. Though he was a businessman, he didn't stay with other

A. businessmen in the evacuation camp. He stayed with us throughout the evacuation, for he believed that we, the fishermen from San Pedro, were good-hearted and honest in spite of our rough speech.

Q. When did you marry?

A. I married pretty late. I married in 1928, shortly before the war broke out.

Q. Did you marry in 1928?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you marry in Japan?

A. No, I married here.

Q. Was your wife Japanese?

A. She was a Nisei.

Q. Was she?

A. She was a Nisei raised in Japan.

Q. How many children do you have?

A. I have three children.

Q. Three?

A. Yes.

Q. Are they all boys?

A. I have two sons and one daughter. The girl you've met over there is the youngest child.

Q. I see. Then, you had your wedding ceremony here.

A. . . . . This grandmother was at a loss, because two of us weren't married in spite of our mature age. The rest of her grandchildren were all married.

Q. You know about the "picture-marriage", don't you?

A. I've heard about it very often. Up until 1924, we ...

Q. You couldn't marry by exchanging your pictures, couldn't you?

A. I'm not sure when the "picture-marriage" started and ended. Anyway, immigration was sustained in 1924. When I came here, a lot of women came here because of the "picture-marriage." One woman met her husband in San Francisco, and she claimed that the man was different from her husband in the picture. In short, he looked more handsome in his re-touched picture.

Q. There must have been various episodes.

A. Yes. Though I myself didn't experience the "picture-marriage," I heard a lot of episodes related to it. The pictures re-touched by the photographer looked better than the actual brides and grooms. They felt disappointed by one another. As I recall, each couple got along all right after all. Quite a few women at that time came here as the brides of "picture-marriages."

Q. Had the "picture-marriage" been abolished by the time you came?

A. There was no such thing as the "picture-marriage" in my days.

Q. Did you intend to send your picture to Japan?

A. No. Being young, I was planning to go back to Japan.

Q. Having your father here with you, you didn't get home-sick, did you?

A. I felt homesick right after I came here.

Q. Oh, did you?

A. Yes. I was all right when I was living with my father and brother. I got homesick and missed Japan badly when I was a schoolboy living with a white family.

Q. Did you? Did you find it hard to get used to American life?

A. No, I didn't. Food, for instance.

Q. Not even food or anything?

A. I wasn't particular about food.

Q. Have you ever been treated with discrimination?

A. Talking about discrimination, there was the "bill of anti-Japanese fishery" in Sacramento. That was a bill for banning the Japanese from fishing. We were all excited about it. The person who proposed the bill did that for money. . . . . I'm not sure that he hated us. We didn't hang on him. Anyway, he proposed the bill every four years. Whenever the bill was passed, the fishermen from the Japanese Fishing Union went and paid money to revoke it.

Q. Did you do that, too?

A. Yes, I did. If we ignored . . .

Q. I see.

A. Every four years.

Q. Every four years?

A. Didn't you read the article on the bill in the Rafu Shinpo?

Q. When was it?

A. The article was in the paper for quite some time last spring.

Q. We don't have the Rafu Shinpo in Sacramento.

A. Don't you? I didn't keep the paper. My wife's brother wrote articles for a long time.

Q. Did you compete with other white fishermen?

A. Yes, we did. We competed for fish.

Q. Did you fish with a net?

A. Yes. They called us Japs. Being hot-tempered, we kicked them. Then, they ran away.

Q. Is that so.

A. They tried to fish even at night. We flashed a search-light, so the fish swam away and they were dazzled by the light. The bill was urged by the Slavic and the Italian fishermen.

Q. Was it?

A. Yes.

Q. What about the Italians?

A. There were quite a few Italians there. The Slavs were worse than the Italians, though.

Q. I see.

A. Those from Yugoslavia were the stowaways.

Q. They were?

A. At one time, quite a number of Mafia members came over.

Q. What's the hard part of catching fish with a net?

A. Even fish don't want to be killed, so they swim away very fast. Once you have missed fish at night, you're out of luck.

Q. What kind of net did you use? The one you put over ...?

A. No. The one you turn like this ....

Q. Do you turn it?

A. And tighten the bottom. It was tough, for the net at that time was small and the tuna swam away very fast. I learned night-time fishing right before the war. Till then, I didn't listen to people telling me how successful they were at night. I didn't believe them till I found out by myself. The fish weren't resistant at night.

Q. Did you fish with a light on?

A. We saw them staying still in the deep water. Getting closer, we saw them swimming fast. They stopped moving as our boat came closer. We put out the net and caught them. We fed them in the net. Anyway, we caught a lot at night.

Q. That's very quick job. Were there only Japanese people living on Terminal Island?

A. There were only the Japanese and a few White-Russians living there. Living among the Japanese for a long time, the Russian children spoke Japanese well. They're still here and there.

Q. Is that so?

A. They said in the Kishu dialect, "Nani yatteru nan," which means, "What are you doing?" in English.

Q. Did you live on Terminal Island up until the war broke out?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. What was the evacuation like during the war?

A. On the very day that the war broke out, we left Terminal Island at midnight or one a.m. without knowing anything about the war. I went to the ... Island located fifty miles off the coast. We were fishing for sardines. Turning to look back, we didn't see the boats which were supposed to come after us. The only boats we saw were the ones far ahead of us. We thought something must be wrong. I turned on the radio about three a.m. and listened to the San Diego control tower broadcasting, "The Japanese airplanes are attacking Hawaii right now. This is neither a joke nor a lie." I said, "The radio said that the Japanese planes were attacking Hawaii." But nobody believed me. I stopped trying to convince them after a while. We started catching sardines about five a.m. We caught so many sardines that we had our net torn. We saved about sixty tons. On the way back, we found that the San Diego lighthouse had no light. Then, everybody realized what I had said before was true. It was before dawn. The Navy put the wire net around the port, so we couldn't get in the port. As soon as the day broke, the Navy opened the gate to let us come

A. in. I saw the Navy men all over the area, even around the canning company. The Japanese children were worried, but they didn't know what to do. It was a severely cold day. The Navy men with the ... came in one after another. They said they would take our Captain Hori with them, and told me to come with them, too. Since I was waiting for the boat to return, I said to Oishi, who had graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, "Oishi, if you go instead of me, you won't have to work on the boat today." He took my words with joy and left. He never came back after that. We unloaded the fish, washed the boat, and dried the net. We couldn't go outside after that. We came back to the port in time, but those who came back later had a hard time. The Navy men were on board from the entrance of the port, so we couldn't go off the coast. Though there were still enough fish for us to catch, we just stayed home every day. My wife started working at the cannery for the first time. I and our children stayed home together. The Filipinos turned hostile against the Japanese, for the Japanese military forces had landed in the Philipines. They sometimes gave us a blow. In case they brought a knife with them, I always carried a screwdriver with me. I couldn't carry a gun. I was always ready to sting their eyes with my screwdriver. They didn't do anything to me, for I had some acquaintances among them. The government was announcing the place where the residents of

A. Terminal Island should go on the first of February. It was about eight o'clock in the morning when the FBI came over. Being unable to go fishing, I was still in bed. The FBI said, "I'd like to ask you some questions. You must come with me." "I haven't had my breakfast yet. Wait for awhile," I said. I served him a cup of coffee. I changed my clothes. Since he said something troublesome ... , I put on my suit. He took me to the immigration office. Every fishermen who had a license with a picture was there. The FBI didn't let us go. Staying there for several days, we were sent to ... by bus. We got on the train. Since the blind was down, none of us knew where we got on and got off the train. Recalling the trip, I daresay we were taken as far as ... .

Q. In Washington?

A. Yes. We were sent to Bismarck on the Great Water. Being around the tenth of February, it was severely cold in Bismarck. The unprepared ones had only a shirt. At first, we were told that the check-up would be only for fifteen minutes or so. They should have told us the truth in the beginning. If they had told us, we could have been prepared. I would neither have escaped nor hidden, even if they had told us the truth. There were a few Americans there. They didn't do anything ... . We didn't know what to do.

Q. Did you own a boat at that time?

A. No. I was renting it from a boat rental store. The net was mine. Some Niseis dried the net and put it away for me. At that time, I could do anything with ....

Q. Did the government take a fishing boat away from an owner?

A. No, the government didn't take any away but kept them and let others with U.S. citizenship use them. They never paid the rent. Moreover, every owner found that some of his tools in his boat were missing. Everybody suffered loss.

Q. Did anyone come back to Terminal Island after the war?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they fish again?

A. Yes, they did.

Q. Did you fish again, too?

A. Yes, I did. When I was in Bismarck right after the war broke out, I heard that Japan was in bad shape. So, I thought I would be sent back to Japan eventually. I didn't imagine I could come back to Terminal Island.

Q. Did your wife and children remain on Terminal Island?

A. My wife remained there for a few months until the Navy ordered her to move out within forty-eight hours. She sold my car and other belongings to the junk shop for a low price. She moved to ... and stayed there for about ten months until she was sent to the Santa Anita race track.

Q. Did everybody get orders to leave Terminal Island?

A. Yes, everybody.

Q. Within forty-eight days?

A. Forty-eight hours, two full days. After staying at Bismarck for seven months, I came back to my wife at Santa Anita.

Q. Did you come back to Santa Anita?

A. When I came back, I saw my wife and children sweeping the stable. The stable was smelly with a lot of dung. After staying at Santa Anita for a month, we moved to Arkansas.

Q. How did you feel when you were taken to the immigration office?

A. ... I was examined. Anyway, they looked down on us. We could have taken revenge on them after the war, but we kept silent. We felt very excited at heart. Everybody felt hostile against the government. For a while after I was captured, Japan was so powerful that I couldn't help being overjoyed at heart. As I was observing the battle in Arkansas, Japan was driven from Hendes Airfield by the U.S. forces. ... flew over Japan, and the Japanese military forces withdrew. I thought the war was hopeless for Japan, but I didn't express my opinion. If I had spoken up, somebody would have knocked me down. I told my wife, "This war is hopeless for Japan. Let's get out of here." Staying in Utah for five years, ...

A. I really felt like returning to fishing.

Q. Were you in Jerome for five years?

A. No. I was there for a year. There were two places, Rohwer and Jerome. After the war, I went to Utah.

Q. Were you in Utah?

A. Yes, I was. Working as an inexperienced farmer, I stayed in Utah for five years.

Q. How was Santa Anita?

A. Being captured by the Americans for seven months, I was released on the fifth of May, 1942. I got to Santa Anita on the seventh. I lived in a huge place at Bismarck and I was strengthened in spirit through my camp life. I felt shocked to see an entirely different life in Santa Anita. The Japanese people there didn't take the war seriously. They were still in a festive mood and thought only about drinking. I was participating in the war mentally. I didn't like their attitude at all.

Q. How did you feel in the stable?

A. I hated the smell there. When I was in Bismarck, the people from Terminal Island, the farmers from Gardena and the Japanese businessmen came there.

Q. From where?

A. The businessmen of Japanese companies, Sumitomo Co., Ltd., for instance. Half of the people in the campe were German.

Q. Were there Germans, too?

A. Not only Germans, but also Italians were there. Each one of us was called and asked questions by the FBI. Some were hit by FBI men very roughly. Though I was ready to be hit at any time, I didn't get hit or anything by them. One Korean man was with the FBI and told me, "I'll be an interpreter for you." I said, "I don't want to employ an interpreter. My English isn't good enough to interpret for others, but it's good enough to express myself. You'd better go now." I remember his name was Kim. The FBI didn't ask me too much.

Q. What did they ask you?

A. They asked me, "If the Japanese soldiers come here, what will you do? To which country will you pledge your loyalty?" I answered, "It's impossible for them to cross the Pacific Ocean. Don't ask me such a silly question." They were trying to test our loyalty. They also asked me, "Is anyone in your family in the active Japanese Armed Forces now?" I answered, "My brother used to serve in the Navy before this war." One of my neighbors was asked the same question and he answered, "I have ... among my relatives." He must have been crazy; he showed the FBI how his relative went to China and cut off Chinaman's head. The FBI was frightened by him.

Q. What happened, then?

A. The FBI may not have believed him. They didn't do anything to him. Being cold and hungry all the time in the camp, I was afraid I might not be able to get out

A. of there alive. Later on, a Japanese cook came and the food was improved.

Q. Did you say that you were in Bismarck for five months?

A. No. I was there for seven months.

Q. Were you?

A. The food was terrible for a while. The rice was just like glue. We were given only a few spoonfuls of rice with a trace of meat in it. I was too hungry to sleep at night. It didn't sound graceful to complain about our hunger all the time, so everybody clenched his teeth and bore the hunger like a warrior's son.

Q. You stayed in Rohwer for a year and went to Utah after that. When did you come back here?

A. It was around this time in 1947.

Q. Was it?

A. I came back ...

Q. Did you go directly to Terminal Island?

A. No. Living around here, I worked as a fisherman. We had been banned from fishing until we won a suit with a dean's support, who was ....

Q. Did the dean take sides with you?

A. Yes. Do you know the politician here, who .... He's still alive. Later on the Slavic fishermen came over. Not being able to compete with us in fishing, the Slavs banned us from fishing again. Being out of a job, I worked as a gardener against my will. I hated gardening.

Q. Having being a fisherman, you must have hated being a gardener.

A. We didn't like working under others. When I was in Utah during the war, I had to have two jobs, for the wage there was awfully low. I worked for a gardener's wholesale dealer during the day and worked as a janitor at night. The gardener's wholesale dealer told me to work there as long as I liked. I left there, because I didn't like the low wage. Anyway, I would have left there sooner or later.

Q. When you were evacuated, did you suffer from loss of personal belongings?

A. My wife piled up all of our things on my car and sold them all for seventy-five dollars. I didn't need anything, not even a stove, in the camp. The government paid us for the loss, but we ended up with a loss after all.

Q. Did you get your net back?

A. Yes, I got it back, but it had been damaged.

Q. When did you resume fishing?

A. Coming back here in 1957, I resumed fishing a year later.

Q. Did you fish as much as you used to?

A. Yes. I didn't find as many fish as I used to, though.

Q. Is that so?

A. It was hard to fish, for the fish were scarce.

Q. Did many Japanese people come back?

A. Yes, they did. Once you've engaged yourself in fishing, you can't engage yourself in any other jobs.

Q. You can't?

A. Fishermen don't know anything besides fishing. Still more, fishermen don't like to be monthly-salaried men. I've never been a salaried-man myself.

Q. Besides the competition among the fishermen, did you compete with anybody else?

A. Among the fishermen, the Slavs and the Italians ....

Q. Were they many in number?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. Were there more Slavs and Italians after the war?

A. Not more, but about ....

Q. Were there many Japanese on Terminal Island?

A. Nobody was living on Terminal Island?

Q. Nobody?

A. The houses had been broken down and replaced by warehouses for the canning company.

Q. Then, people didn't live there, did they?

A. Right. No houses were left on the island. The government claims that they have compensated us for our loss. But the compensation wasn't enough for us to regain our property.

Q. When did you buy your home?

A. I bought it at the end of 1947, after I had returned from Utah. I paid a down payment.

Q. How much was it?

A. It was ten thousand dollars at that time. The down

A. payment was four thousand dollars.

Q. Could you buy it easily?

A. Yes, I could.

Q. Wasn't anybody opposed to selling a house to the Japanese people?

A. No, not at all.

Q. What organization did you participate in? For example, a prefectual organization, etc.

A. The prefectual organization often invited me to join, but I wasn't a member of it. I was a member of the Shizuoka Industrial Association. I was a treasurer. I had the membership book and other records burned during the war. I kept money and we contributed flowers to a funeral service, etc. I'm sure we still have about thirty dollars left; I'd better make a report of our account since ... the war broke out. I went to Mexico and Central America through Panama for deep-sea fishing. I had been keeping my diary for a couple of years before FBI took it away. They returned it to me later. When I was in Panama, I took a lot of pictures for no special reason. I burned them all in the basement when the war started.

Q. Do you still have your diary?

A. Having moved frequently, I lost it somewhere.

Q. Can't you find it anywhere?

A. No, I'm afraid not.

Q. What did you write about in your diary?

A. I wrote mostly about the ports on the coast, fishing and Panama.

Q. How far did you get in South America?

A. I went as far as the Panama Canal.

Q. Did you?

A. Turning back from the Panama Canal, I stopped at ... Island. The United States constructed an airport there in order to protect Panama from Japan. The first Japanese man went to the island in 1932, about forty years ago. The inhabitants lived only in the southern part of the island. I wrote about the island in my diary, too. I wanted to keep the pictures, but I burned them all.

Q. It was too bad.

A. I could have been in trouble if I had kept them. The government wasn't favorable toward pictures of Panama. Carrying rifles on their shoulders, the soldiers told me not to come closer to them and not to take pictures. Being thick-skinned, I asked some other person, "Can I take pictures?" He answered, "All right. Take them quickly." I took many pictures of the soldiers.

Q. What's your pasttime or hobby?

A. Nothing in particular.

Q. Do you like fishing best after all?

A. Yes. Fishing is quite interesting.

Q. Do you like going fishing in a river or somewhere?

A. No, not too much. Being dull, my friends ask me to go

A. fishing and enjoy it as a sport. What's so good about catching a few fish? I always tell them that I've gotten enough of fishing in my trade.

Q. Did your children attend the relocation center school?

A. No. They were too young to go to school. The girl, you met before coming here, had just started walking at that time.

Q. I see. What was it like during the depression?

A. It was 1932, before the war, when we were seized by the depression. The sardines ... couldn't move all of the sudden and fell out from the top. I gave up fishing and went to downtown Los Angeles. The depression was there, too. I and some others began to produce vegetables jointly. The cucumbers were twenty-five cents per box; grapes were also twenty-five cents per box; and turnips were twenty-five cents per .... We couldn't make profits from anything, because of the low wholesale price. Stopping production, I returned to San Pedro. I had barely enough money to eat at that time. Some Japanese people couldn't even feed themselves. There was a gambling house in Los Angeles, where you could get a free lunch. I myself never ate there, for I didn't like eating at such a place. Lots of starving Japanese people ate lunch there. So, no one in Los Angeles spoke ill of the gambling place.

Q. Did you gamble there?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Did you lose quite a lot?

A. No, not too much.

Q. Were you a winner?

A. No, I wasn't. Since I knew a dealer, he let me watch others gambling without participating. I just gambled with him alone. I asked him to let me win twenty dollars .... Whenever you gamble, you have an aim to win .... He never let me win even when he and I were alone.

Q. Wasn't gambling illegal?

A. Yes, it was.

Q. Did you gamble underground?

A. No. The building we used to gamble in was beautiful at that time; it's dirty now. The chief of police was a stockholder. Whenever he phoned us to stop gambling for the time being, we stopped and kept silent.

Q. Did he make any profit from the gambling business?

A. Yes. Being a stockholder, he earned as much as he invested.

Q. Then ....

A. I never lost, because I never gambled. To talk about something bad, a Naniwa-jin or a person from Naniwa was murdered. He was the best ....

Q. Was he Japanese? Naniwa-jin?

A. Yes, he was. Since then, the gambling place was so restricted that it became bankrupt. Nobody knew exactly

A. who murdered him. But we had an idea who did it. They ran away to Shanghai before the gambling place went bankrupt. The one who let us win some was one of them. There was no gambling place in Japanese Town after that.

Q. What kind of events took place in the Japanese community around there before the war?

A. There were gangsters in the community. They shot one another at the corner of Fourth Street and San Pedro Street in 1921 or 1922.

Q. Were they all gangsters?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. I didn't know that.

A. I'm not sure whether somebody was really shot or not; I just heard about the fight. The worse you are, the more influence you have among gangsters. They fought one another, but they never did anything to decent people. Once they fought, it was the end for them, because they couldn't stay here any longer.

Q. I see.

A. Even if there had been a gambling place in Japanese Town, it wouldn't have been too bad. The Japanese people gambled in Chinatown anyway. They could have spent the same money in Japanese Town. Though some people say I'm quibbling, I really believe so.

Q. What problem did you have besides gambling?

A. We had a problem on immigration.

Q. What was that?

A. Some gangsters threatened stowaways and robbed money from them. There were two large groups of gangsters in Los Angeles. Those two groups fought and appeared in the newspaper quite often. The stowaways hid themselves whenever they saw an immigration officer. They were just like the Mexican stowaways today.

Q. Were there many stowaways on Terminal Island?

A. Yes. The Stowaways from Kishu were there.

Q. Why did they stowaway?

A. They came to New York on a boat and got off there. Not being able to feed themselves in New York, they came here.

Q. Were they seamen?

A. Yes, they were. Some crossed the border from Mexico. As soon as they crossed the border, their relatives and friends picked them up. Though we don't have problems too much today, we used to have a lot. Immigration officers reminded me of a grampus. You often see it on a TV, don't you? Whenever a grampus appears, all of the other fish disappear.

Q. Is it because a grampus eats them?

A. Avoiding a direct warning, we said, "A grampus is waiting." Then, every stowaway went aside or hid himself. By the time the officer came in, everybody had gone. The warning was spread by someone, from somewhere, before the officer appeared. I had an idea where the warning came from.

Q. Were the living conditions in those days bad?

A. The majority of the Japanese were single at that time. They drank and gambled without saving any money. Few fishermen bought a house.

Q. Few did?

A. Thinking back, I feel pity for them. Only a few married and set up a house.

Q. Among the fishermen?

A. Yes. These days, even a young couple pays a down payment and buys a house. Young people today are wiser than those at that time. Though they could have bought a house at a fair price, they didn't even think about buying it. Living in company housing; they didn't have to pay rent for a while.

Q. Company housing?

A. They were charged a little later, but they didn't have to pay in the beginning. The only thing they needed was food. Eating their own fish, they could live quite reasonably.

Q. Were the majority of the residents on Terminal Island single?

A. Yes. It was awful.

Q. Was it?

A. Yes. Though there were some women on the island, the single men outnumbered them. A lot of children were there during the war.

Q. Were many children there?

A. Yes, there were.

Q. Did they come to work?

A. They were born there and went to school there. They didn't speak English even at school. When they spoke English, they were thought to be saucy by their friends. My daughter, who is in her fifties, doesn't pronounce English well even now; instead, she speaks Japanese well.

Q. Do you miss the life you led in those days?

A. No, I don't miss it.

Q. Can't you lead that kind of life any more?

A. Thinking back, I wouldn't call it a human life.

Q. What makes you think so?

A. People drank, gambled, and fought. Being broke, they deceived others' wives and ... to rob money. There were too many problems at that time. I adore the present society, for I can live like a human being should live. I'm surprised that such an awful life was accepted by those people.

Q. Was it due to their youth?

A. It wasn't a human life. People today own a house and car . . . . Of course, we couldn't own a car at that time. There weren't too many cars on Terminal Island, either. The only people I saw in a car were the well-to-do Japanese.

Q. How long did it take to go on a deep-sea fishing trip?

A. When we went on a coastal fishing voyage, we came back in a day or two. When we went on a deep-sea fishing trip, we were away for a month or so. We loaded fish on the boat during that time. Being greedy, the boat owner forced us to load as many fish as possible all over the deck. Greediness looked really ugly to me, an outsider. The barrelful of fish on the deck was so heavy that it made the boat go down. As a result, we had a wet deck all the time. One cook from downtown got sick because of it.

Q. Was he Japanese?

A. Yes, he was. We knew the boat wouldn't sink. Being an amateur, he was afraid that the boat might sink. We always sailed back home against the current. It was miserable to be attacked by the waves. I can't imagine how I could bear such a life. I'll never do that again.

Q. Was it that bad even on a big fishing boat?

A. Yes. Because we came back home against the current.

Q. How did you keep the fish fresh for a month?

A. Nowadays, you freeze fish, but in our day, we packed ice with the fish.

Q. Did the ice keep for a month?

A. Yes, it did.

Q. Did it?

A. ... we packed enough ice and sometimes we replenished the ice in Mexico.

Q. Was there a boat supplying ice in Mexico?

A. Yes. The ice in Mexico wasn't very good, but it didn't melt too fast because of our good icebox. We kept it cold.

Q. How many people were on board?

A. Twelve or thirteen people.

Q. Did you lift up the fish by a machine when you caught them?

A. No. If there had been a machine, we couldn't have spread a net. When we fished with a net, we scooped up the fish. The scoop had a string just like a purse. When we loosened the string, a number of fish came out. We packed the fish in the barrels. The fishermen in Japan throw fish in a tank and kill them with water. We don't have as many fish today as we used to have. So, fishing is quite restricted these days.

Q. Were the Japanese people the first to fish on Terminal Island?

A. Yes, they were. At first, Japanese people caught aiboko off the coast of Mexico and ate them raw as "sashimi". Later, we tried to can them; we did a good job. The can was white and looked very good. We began our canning industry with capital invested by some whites.

Q. Did you use a fishing net on the boat?

A. No. At first, the canning company invested their capital in us for the purpose of buying a fishing boat. Then,

A. the company took the fish for canning. Canned fish in those days was delicious. The canned fish today is old and lousy.

Q. Did fishermen over catch the fish or have fish disappear anywhere?

A. We may have over caught . . . . It may be related to the current. There were so many sardines that they looked like dust all over the ocean. They're quite scarce now.

Q. There used to be that many?

A. They disappeared in the twinkling of an eye. At one time, after the war, we produced canned sardines from Southern California. Now that we don't produce any, we import a little from Poland. The canned sardines from Poland aren't tasty enough to eat.

Q. Is tuna called "bunsen"? Were the Japanese the first to fish for it?

A. At one time we produced canned aiboko quite a lot. Those canned aiboko were tasty.

Q. Compared to the price at that time, isn't it more expensive now?

A. Yes, it is. Being frozen, the fish from Japan aren't good at all. Once you freeze a fish, you'll spoil its flavor. The same thing is happening here, too. The fish caught in South America are brought here frozen.

Q. Isn't a fresh fish good for "sashimi?"

A. Never, never.

Q. Compared to before the war, how is Terminal Island different today?

A. There used to be people living on the island. The Japanese, ... and we used to have plenty of food. There isn't anybody there today except for the people working at the cannery. I'm sure those workers can get some food there, but I don't see any stores around there now. The only buildings I see are the warehouses for a cannery and a dock.

Q. If it were possible, would you consider going back there with other Japanese people and work there again?

A. No, I'll never do that again.

Q. Never?

A. No. I don't want to lead such a life again.

Q. How did the people at that time feel about their living?

A. They didn't feel anything in particular.

Q. They didn't, did they?

A. Once you've lived in a town with a house and car, you can never go back to such a terrible life.

Q. How was it terrible? Wasn't it stable?

A. No, it wasn't. Anyway, I've learned it wasn't a human life.

Q. Was it too strenuous?

A. It was a rough life.

Q. When you were asked about loyalty, how did you feel?

A. The Japanese people from Japan felt loyalty toward Japan. I don't know how the children born here felt .... Quite a few children born on Terminal Island were in favor of Japan, for they went to a Japanese school and received a Japanese-style education. Though I have Japanese citizenship, I can't forget about Japan.

Q. I appreciate your feelings. When you came back here, did anyone or any organization help you resume your life?

A. There might have been such organization here, but I didn't get any help from anybody.

Q. Where was your father when you returned?

A. Nobody was here. I, my wife, and children were in Los Angeles. At one time, we stayed at my counsin's place for a week or so.

Q. Then, did you start working as a gardener?

A. Yes. Though I worked, I didn't make too much money. I'm sure some people lived on a religious organization or something. I don't like to live on others, so I bear certain amount of hardship by clenching my teeth.

Q. Compared to boats today, the boats in your day were smaller in size, weren't they?

A. Yes, they were all smaller.

Q. Was yours the biggest one at that time?

A. Being built in 1924, it was cheap.

Q. Was it built here?

A. Yes. In San Pedro.

Q. Were you still building boats here at that time?

A. Though we had a carpenter, he didn't know how to build boats.

Q. Did anyone buy a boat in Japan? Oh, you couldn't bring it here from Japan, could you?

A. Somebody bought a few boats in Japan and brought them here. You couldn't bring a tiny boat like mine.

Q. Didn't you have any problems in personal relations among the crew when you went deep-see fishing?

A. Being friends one another, we didn't have any problems. If we had had any women, it might have been a different story. Being all men, we didn't have any problems. I've heard that fishermen fought a lot on boats in Japan. We didn't even quarrel orally. We were peaceful.

Q. Have you ever overtaken by a storm?

A. Yes, I have. I was often afraid that the boat wouldn't endure the storm. But I forgot the hardship as soon as the storm passed.

Q. I see. Did you throw away fish when a storm came?

A. Never. We wouldn't have given them up even for our lives. Whenever you're overtaken by a storm, you mustn't force yourself to escape from it. Sail as the waves move, and do your best in keeping a boat from going down. . . . A big storm is usually about seven hundred miles in diameter.

Q. Seven hundred miles?

A. Being patient, you usually get it over with overnight.

Q. Does it usually last overnight?

A. Yes. If a storm is extra big, it takes two nights to pass.

Q. Then, you have to endure for two nights, don't you?

A. Not being able to cook with fire, we ate only canned food. Such waves wouldn't hurt a steamship, but they really shook up our fishing boat. Being along the coast, you can escape from stormy weather. Whereas, being off the coast, you can do nothing about it. About twenty years ago, some Japanese fishermen were fishing with us around the island, a thousand miles from here. We turned our boat around, but they anchored their boat. A storm came and threw up five people to their deaths on the rock. When we heard what had happened, it was too dark for us to go and find them. At day break, we found three dead bodies. Two were missing. We picked up seven others, who were lucky enough to be thrown ashore by the waves.

Q. How about the seven people?

A. They were thrown ashore by the waves.

Q. Was the storm that big?

A. Yes, it was. The night before the storm came, we warned them, "You'd better prepare yourselves, for a storm will come tonight." Being experienced, we could predict when a storm was coming. We tied up other boats carrying some lifeboats on them in case a storm hit us.

Q. What did you tie up?

A. We tied up all the boats. The storm came as we had predicted. It lasted till eleven o'clock the next morning.

Q. Were you at home at that time?

A. We were on the island together.

Q. Were you on the island together?

A. Yes, we were.

Q. Were you on the island?

A. No, I was on board. The night before the storm came, it was about this time of day when we say some cushion-like clouds going round and round in the sky. We took a picture of these clouds, which I still have even now. Being prepared, we were rather calm when the storm came. But the ones who were thrown up seemed to be disturbed.

Q. Fishing can be fatal, can't it?

A. A fisherman should pay attention to the weather. As soon as I get up everyday, I take a look at the weather condition.

Q. Do you rely on your intuition to read the sky?

A. I observe clouds, but I can tell weather intuitively most of the time.

Q. That's the best way.

A. Yes. Wind blows after a rain without fail.

Q. Rain won't harm you, but wind does, doesn't it?

A. I don't care how much it rains. A mist is harmful.

Q. A mist?

A. Blocking your sight, a mist is dangerous.

Q. Have you ever had a crash at sea?

A. No. Even if you stop your boat, you can't be safe in a mist.

Q. Is this because some other boat might hit yours?

A. That's right.

Q. So, what would you do?

A. You just sail slowly, blowing a whistle.

Q. Is this safer than stopping?

A. Stopping is dangerous.

Q. Is it?

A. Being experienced, fishermen don't have accidents too often. Fishermen are more reliable than the captains of steamers. Though the captains know theories, they aren't practically experienced.

Q. Did you meet typhoons frequently?

A. Yes, especially this time of year - from the end of August to September.

Q. Did you often meet hurricanes?

A. Yes. A hurricane brought a very stormy rain. We could do nothing when a wind rocked our boat. In 1924, a friend of my working for white fishermen came to me on the night before he was to sail. He said, "I'll leave tomorrow," shaking my hands. He left and never came back.

Q. Till then everybody . . . .

A. When you go, you go downwind. The wind changes all of a sudden, ... whether it's good or not.

Q. Was he on a small boat or on a large one?

A. The boat was about eighty "shaku"*** long.

Q. Is a foot as long as a "shaku"?

A. A "shaku" by a carpenter's square is as long as a foot.

Q. By "shaku," do you mean an American foot or a Japanese "shaku"?

A. I always mistake a foot for a "shaku." A "shaku" by a cloth measure isn't the same as a foot, but a "shaku" by a carpenter's square is almost as long as a foot.

Q. How many fishermen were on the boat?

A. More than ten. He always reported his location whenever he was away except on the last voyage. Getting sick, his wife wanted to contact him. We called him on a wireless telephone in vain.

Q. Didn't you find him?

A. Nobody found him. After a wooden boat sinks, its wooden floor floats. It's funny that I didn't find even a piece of wood.

Q. You didn't find it even when you went off the coast?

A. Right. I wonder where the boat sank. I'll bet it sank before it got too far.

Q. Did you hear of such accidents very often?

A. Yes, quite often. Boat ... boat . . .

Q. Three of my uncles died at the same time.

***A Japanese measure of length

A. How did it happen?

Q. They were overcome by a typhoon while they were catching squids.

A. Oh! squids. It is said that a wind always blows after squids.

Q. Is that right?

A. Catching squids is too dangerous to be in my line.

Q. I've heard that they caught an unbelievably huge number of squids. One of four swam back home. Three uncles were holding onto the upside-down boat for a while. Trying to right the boat, they used up their energy.

A. Using up energy is fatal. It's best to hold on still without forcing yourself to do anything. The whites can endure in the sea for a long time, while the Japanese can't survive.

Q. Why?

A. I don't know why Orientals can't endure.

Q. Are they impatient?

A. Yes, they are. Anyway, they can't sustain mental strength. One white man survived in the sea for five to ten days.

Q. Are Orientals weak physically?

A. Yes, they are.

Q. Is it because they are fat?

A. Meat-eaters are strong.

Q. Are they?

A. Being on a lifeboat, you shouldn't move as the food supply gets scarce. Sleep and don't say a word, for you don't

A. even have drinking water. Once you drink sea water, you'll become insane and jump into the sea.

Q. Being unbelievably successful, my uncles caught as many squids as they could load onto their boat. By the time they looked around, everybody had gone away. They were left alone there.

A. Anyway, I don't go for catching squids. It's too dangerous.

Q. Do you catch squids around here, too?

A. Yes. No wind blows here. You put out a light when you catch squids, then a number of them gather around it. You put down a long ... and lift it up as they get in. You can catch twenty to thirty squids at a time. I've eaten enough squids, at least.

Q. Have you eaten that many?

A. At a sushi-shop, they ask me, "How about squids?" I feel a cold sweat whenever I see squids again. I don't want to eat a squid, lobster or abalone any more. At one time, I went to Mexico to fish for sardines?

Q. Michigan?

A. Mexican fishermen brought a large sack of lobsters to exchange for cigarrettes. So, I'd had enough of lobsters. At a retail fish store in Japan, lobsters are awfully expensive, aren't they?

Q. Do you eat raw fish?

A. We had a good tuna called "bunsen". We chose a meaty one and cut off it's head. We kept it in an icebox for three days instead of freezing it in packed ice.

Q. Did you keep it outside for three days?

A. No. I kept it in the icebox and ate it between two and four days. It tasted best on the third and fourth day. We threw it away into the sea on the fifth day. It was a waste, but nobody complained about that, for we had more than enough. We found very tasty tuna at an uninhabited island called ... located two hundred and seventy miles from here. Even in Japan, you can't find better tuna than the ones around that island.

Q. Having a trained mouth for fresh fish, you can't eat ordinary raw fish, can you?

A. I can eat any raw fish now, for I just stay home and don't go fishing myself. If I'm lucky, I'll be able to catch tuna on the island. If not, I'll have to come back home on an empty boat, which is a loss. That's why I don't go.

Q. Don't you find any even if you wait for days?

A. Right. When I went to the island, I checked at night to see if there were fish around there. If not, when there weren't any fish, I weighed an anchor and caught shrimp instead. At dawn, I got a basketful of shrimp.

Q. Big shrimp?

A. Yes. I fried "tempura" for thirteen people. (I've got tired of shrimp.)

Q. If people here hear you, they'll say you've indulged in luxury too much.

A. My relatives in Japan will say I'm selfish and spoiled to say such a thing. As for me, (I'm not crazy about shrimp any more.) There's good abalone in Mexico.

Q. Is that so?

A. I sliced a live abalone and fried . . . . Having been over caught by fishermen from Japan, abalone is decreasing in number.

Q. Decreasing? Not multiplying fast, abalone might decline pretty soon. During the war, Filipino fishermen replaced the Japanese fishermen. That's why we didn't find too many fish around here after the war; not too many here, but there used to be lots of sardines around Seattle. There used to be plenty of herring in the huge Alaska Sea. Fish are scarce all over the earth; we can't find them anywhere. Sardines were a dollar and ninety cents per pound when I went to a store the other day. I paid four dollars for those sardines from Japan. They were rich and delicious. In Peru, they're a lot of anchovy, which are called "manza-iwashi" in Japan. Anchovy are dried and ground into powder. The powder is supposed to be used as a fertilizer, but it's exported as chicken food, because it has enough eggs to be mixed with chicken food. What else did you fish for?

A. Anything else . . . .

Q. On Terminal Island . . . .

A. We caught "aji" and mackerel near the island.

Q. How do you say "aji" in English?

A. It's called a spice-mackerel or a horse-mackerel. Once we were notified by the Fishing Union not to write "horse-mackerel" on the can labels. The cans labled as "horse-mackerel" didn't sell well. It's also called "jakki-maguro" or "shisashi-maguro" in Japanese. Being cheap, canned spice-mackerel is popular among the blacks in the South. It doesn't sell well here.

Q. What about sharks?

A. I don't know too much about sharks.

Q. Don't you catch sharks here?

A. We can't. The Japanese fishermen here used to go to Mexico to catch sharks. They saved moustaches, dried them and sent them to China. Chinese people eat weird things.

Q. Sharks are made into "kamaboko", aren't they?

A. They're made into "kamaboko" in Japan.

Q. Not here?

A. ... isn't here. I wonder what ingredients they use here now. I don't think they have fish good enough for making "kamaboko."

Q. What's yellowtail?

A. It's "buri." It's a little bit different from the"buri" in Japan.

Q. Did you catch it, too?

A. There used to be plenty of yellowtails, but not any more.

Q. In Japan, yellowtails are cultured in baskets within bays.

A. You can still catch some on an island near San Diego. Fifteen or sixteen years ago, I was paid by the Fishing Union for ... ten thousand yellowtails of this size. After I'd pricked markings onto them, I let them go. Some were caught in San Diego, others were caught in farther south. I couldn't trace even half of them after that. I remember I got paid about a dollar per fish. I put a note "If you catch this, please send it forward to San Pedro - and a number in each tube.

Q. Would you like to advise your grandson or somebody to become a fisherman?

A. No, I wouldn't advise my sons to become fishermen.

Q. Is it too hard to be a fisherman?

A. Yes. Besides that, you don't make too much profit.

Q. It was exciting for you, when you were young, wasn't it?

A. Yes, it was. But I wouldn't advise them. Last year, my wife's cousin worked as a fisherman in San Diego and he earned forty thousand dollars a year. Being single, he had to pay a lot of income tax. Now that they have a large boat, many fishermen can go fishing together.

Q. Is he still single?

A. Yes, he is.

Q. What are your sons' occupations?

A. My elder son is a dentist.

Q. Is he?

A. I don't know about my younger son.

Q. Thank you very much for a lot of time. It's six-thirty already.

A. You're welcome. I hope my story is helpful.

Q. Yes, it is. After translating your story into English, can I show it to the Sansei?

A. Yes, please. But I don't want you to tell them my name . . . .

Q. It'll be anonymous.

A. I see.

Q. It'll be helpful for the Sansei.

A. When the war started, some were accused of having stated something disadvantageous to the Japanese. I don't want such a thing to happen to me.

Q. But a fact is a fact . . . .

A. I'm not sure ... was bad . . . . I heard it from others.

Q. I'm also trying not to hurt the feelings of others, working on this project.

A. Anyway, only those fishermen who had a license with a picture were arrested. It wasn't the business of private citizens, but it was the government's business. I can never forget such a dirty business.

Q. The residents of Terminal Island were arrested first, weren't they?

A. Yes. Right after the war started, a Korean doctor named (Ken Son Hahn) told the U. S. Government that the fishermen in San Pedro were all spies. Forming (the dice committee), the U. S. Government tightened its control over Japanese people. The committee also reported to the government that the Japanese fishermen were all officers of the Japanese .... Some fishermen were ex-Navy men, but none of us were spies. If we had been spies, we would have gone back to Japan before the war.

Q. None of you were spies, right?

A. That's right.

Q. Your wife must have had to go through difficulties, being alone to take care of the children.

A. She passed away.

Q. When did she pass away?

A. She passed away just six years ago. On the morning when the war started, she was at home and saw the FBI looking for Captain Hori. She and her sister said jokingly, "Whose uncle is he?" in Japanese. Having graduated from a Japanese college, the FBI man understood what they had said. Being embarrassed, my wife ran away. Quite a few FBI men were graduates of Japanese colleges at that time. Talking only English, he didn't give her a chance to know that they understood Japanese.

Q. Was he Japanese?

A. No. He was a white man.

Q. Oh, he had studied in Japan.

A. Yes. He was one of the whites born in Japan. My wife felt embarrassed.

Q. She was talking to her sister in Japanese?

A. Having been arrested, I wasn't there, but the guy named Hori was . . . .

Q. I wonder if the white men thought she was hiding Captain Hori.

A. We couldn't be at ease speaking Japanese, for some FBI men understood Japanese.

Q. The Issei had a hard time.

A. Yes, we did during the war. We went completely broke.

Q. You didn't have any savings, did you?

A. I withdrew all of my savings and spent it all in the evacuation camp. Later on, the government paid us back through Yokohama Bank of Commerce at a current exchange rate. I'd invested in Japanese stocks before the war. But the company I'd invested in disappeared sometime during the war. If the company had existed, I could have got twenty to twenty-six dollars in exchange for a hundred yen. What a stupid thing!

Q. Did you invest?

A. Yes, I invested in Japanese stocks.

Q. There was no way for you to get back the money?

A. No way. I invested about ten thousand yen. The company was called Nisso Industries, and Yuji Nagai was the president. The people who had invested in Sumitomo stocks couldn't get any money, either. Having their business here, Yokohama Bank of Commerce told the government that they would be willing to exchange yen for dollars. The rich people here got back fifty to a hundred thousand dollars at that time.

Q. Don't you want to go back to Japan to live?

A. Not knowing the situation well, I can't live there.

Q. Because you don't know the situation there?

A. Right. I'm used to living here. Though I've been here for fifty years, I don't speak English well. My Japanese isn't good, either. I'm just in between. Since my children were raised here, it's the best way for us to live here. I don't have too many friends and acquaintances in Japan. Besides that, having been taken over by the next generation, the house I was born and raised in doesn't have a place for me. I'll be just a hanger-on there. Having established my life here for fifty years, I feel my home is here. After the yen re-valuation, even ten thousand yen doesn't buy you enough. When I went back to Japan five or six years ago, I got very little for ten thousand yen.

Q. You're right. If you eat out in Japan, ten thousand yen will fly out of your wallet quickly.

A. According to a tour guide in a Japanese weekly magazine, ten thousand yen for one meal is just the average; three or four thousand yen is the lowest price. Three thousand yen is ten dollars. Making a trip to Japan, we wife's brother wrote about Japan in the Rafu Shimpo. He paid seven dollars and fifty cents for ham and eggs. He wrote that it was the most expensive breakfast he had ever eaten. I can't live in Japan.

Q. You have nothing to do with fishing any more?

A. No more.

Q. Don't you want to go fishing again?

A. I just want to see the sea. I don't want to catch fish.

Q. When did you retire?

A. I retired about fifteen years ago. I had a whisky ... business for ten years after that. This was a dangerous and bad business.

Q. You have a good build, don't you?

A. Believe it or not, I lost ten pounds. I'm on a diet now. My stomach used to stick out too much for me to tie my shoelaces.

Q. Were you that heavy?

A. It wasn't good for me.

Q. Being trained, a fisherman usually has a good build.

A. I had a heart disease in April. Not all of my blood circulated through my heart. I'd have almost been better off dead, but I've recovered and ... . I had it taken out in May .... I don't feel bad at all now.

Q. You haven't had an operation yet, have you?

A. No, I haven't. I was cut here; a doctor put some medicine here and produced something like an X-ray by a machine, then he showed me something like a TV. I could see the blood clot clearly.

Q. Did you see it yourself?

A. I didn't know it at that moment, but I was told later and realized it.

Q. He must have taken a picture.

A. He drew a picture for me. Not all but twenty percent of my blood was clotted. At my age, it's normal not to have perfect blood circulation. I don't want to live too long. Three years ago, my mother died at the age of ninety-nine. She felt terribly bored all the time. She was too old to listen to the radio or to watch TV.

Q. Where was she?

A. In Japan. It's our family custom to celebrate one's hundredth year birthday at the age of ninety-nine. I went to Japan to celebrate her hundredth birthday. Seeing her well, I came back to the U.S. without any worries. But she became sick a few months later. Everybody said I'd better see her while she was alive, so I went to Japan again only four months after my previous trip there. Closing my store, I stayed in Japan for a week. She never recovered from her illness.

Q. She was long-lived, wasn't she?

A. Outsiders say she was happy to live such a long time, but I'm not sure if she was really happy.

Q. Having been seated for a long time, you must've felt tired.

A. I just sit down at home everyday without doing anything.

Q. Thank you very much, indeed. Would you like to say anything to the Nisei and Sansei?

A. As I've turned old, I don't have anything to say. Observing young people today, I daresay that the Nisei and Sansei are more reliable than the young people in Japan. They are spineless.

Q. Are they?

A. Some compare them to bean sprouts, which is true. They shouldn't be that weak-minded.

Q. Especially young men, right?

A. Yes, Japanese movie stars and singers are spoiling the society. Besides that ... . Young people want to buy a house as soon as they marry. They can't use ... .

Q. It seems that Japanese people have too much money today.

A. Japanese people drink "sake" too much. Not drinking liquor myself, I don't like drunks.

A. I owned a liquor store for ten years, but I've never drunk it myself. I don't like the taste of alcohol. . . . I'm a serious type of person. The Japanese people who had come here before us were terrible. They drank, gambled, fought and died. Young people now are much more serious.

Q. Well, shall we finish now?

A. What I've done isn't good enough for me to advise young people. I admire them.

Q. Having been a fisherman, you've had a unique experience. It's rare to find an Issei fisherman.

A. There aren't too many Issei fishermen. In my bachelorhood, my acquaintances drank, gambled, and fought. Women were scarce in number at that time. More women got here after 1924. Immigration was banned after that.

Q. About half of the Issei males died without getting married, didn't they?

A. Yes. Some died, others returned to Japan. Having been irresponsible in their young days, the single Issei in Japan are living alone in misery. They have neither a family nor savings. They say it's better not to have any burdens. As for me, a life without a family isn't a true life. You'll be at a loss after you get old. The government doesn't take care of you completely. In the first place, you shouldn't rely on others. I always tell my children not to rely on others. Japanese people complain that the Japanese Social Security system doesn't pay you enough. They just think of getting money for free. The social welfare in Sweden is known as a good example, but we shouldn't forget that Swedish workers have half of their income deducted for social security. Some Swedish people left Sweden because of that. Even if you'd like to start your own business after you retire, you can't, because you don't have enough savings. People

A. in Japan said to me, "We envy you, because social security system in the U.S. pays you well." I said, "We work and pay a premium for it." They think we get our social security for free.

Q. Are your friends from your Terminal Island days still alive?

A. Yes, but they're scattered. Most of them are in Long Beach. I think they're still working as gardeners.

Q. Since you've retired from fishing, you don't want to fish again, do you?

A. Being old, I can't fish any more. You can lead young fishermen, can't you? My grandfather was a flying fish catcher. Because . . . . A flying fish swims away if people come closer right after it lays eggs. So, you have to watch out for the color of the sea in order to throw a net at the right time. Watching the color was his specialty, for his age didn't matter for that job. Don't you have such a job?

A. A fisherman has to bring fish.

Q. Did you look for sardines?

A. I found them at night. The water around them looked white as if there were lights in the bottom of the sea.

Q. Did you put out lights?

A. No. Sardines swam and moved the water; that's why the water looked white.

Q. Did you see it even at night?

A. The color of the water changed during the daytime. So, I

A. couldn't see deep down. It was better to look for sardines at night. You don't find them any more, though.

Q. No more?

A. I don't know where they've gone, but fish have disappeared.

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